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In 346
Housekeepers' Chat

Tuesday, November 19, 1929.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Choosing Blankets for Wear." Information from Ruth O'Brien, Chief, Division of Textiles and Clothing, Bureau of Home Economics. U.S.D.A.

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"Greetings, Aunt Sammy."

Miss O'Brien was in her office. I was glad to find Miss O'Brien in. She is a busy person, and I had promised, on my honor as a radio writer, to get you some information about blankets this week.

"What's on your mind, Aunt Sammy?" asked Miss O'Brien, sitting down before a big flat-topped desk -- a very efficient-looking desk, by the way, piled with all sorts of interesting magazines and papers about textiles.

"What's on your mind, Aunt Sammy?" asked Miss O'Brien.

"Blankets," I replied. "A lady listener wants to know what kind of blankets to buy this fall, when she goes hunting bargains."

"Bargains?" said Miss O'Brien. "Tell her to be careful, Aunt Sammy. Things are not always what they seem -- especially in the bargain world. There are a number of points to consider, in buying blankets. First, there's size. Before your friend goes blanket-buying, tell her to measure her mattress, and decide just how large a blanket she wants. She might find a bargain table of blankets, all right, but what use is a bargain blanket, if it won't cover one's toes, in the winter time? Don't forget that size is an important item, when buying blankets, or any other bedding, for that matter.

"Second, consider the weight of the blanket. Just suppose, for a certain particular bed, you want a heavy wool blanket. You find a bargain table of wool blankets, supposed to be heavy. They look heavy -- no doubt about that. But remember, Aunt Sammy, that a light blanket may be fluffed up so that it looks like a heavy one. Mill-men buy wool by weight. It would be a good idea for you and your friends to ask the weight of the blankets you buy.

"Third, note whether the blanket is firm or weak -- that is, find out the tensile strength. How? Dig your hand through the nap, and see whether the foundation fabric is firmly woven. Don't be misled by a blanket with a beautiful nap -- and a weak foundation.

"Fourth, decide whether you want a blanket which is all wool, all cotton, or wool and cotton mixed. If you want a wool blanket, then look at the label. If the label states that the blanket is All Wool or 100 Per Cent Wool, then you are reasonably safe in buying it.

"Suppose you want a blanket which is wool-and-cotton mixed. Ask the salesman what percentage of cotton there is in the blanket. Do you know, Aunt Sammy, that some of the blankets, sold as wool-and-cotton mixtures, have only a tiny stripe of wool in the border?"

"No indeed," I said. "I had a vague idea that a blanket, wool-and-cotton mixed, was about half wool and half cotton. What a lot we women have to learn about the things we buy all the time!"

"We have," said Miss O'Brien. "And as for wool-and-cotton blankets, there's one case on record in which the wool in the blanket consisted of only a thread in the selvage. Whenever you buy a wool-and-cotton mixed blanket, see that the wool is worked throughout the blanket, not just in the border, Aunt Sammy."

"I shall. I'll look the salesman fearlessly in the eye, and tell him I know what I want -- and if he dares to sell me a blanket with only a thread of wool, and that in the selvage -- he'll lose a customer -- just like that!"

"Good for you," said Miss O'Brien. "And don't forget, while you're considering size, weight, strength, and the percentage of wool and cotton -- don't forget to look at the binding. Is it a fancy silk or satin binding? It may wear right out. You see there's a difference in the shrinkage between a silk binding and the blanket itself. After the blanket is washed, the binding may be puckered and ugly. Don't be taken in by a pretty silk binding and a big silk bow.

"One more thing -- the amount of nap on the blanket is important. The warmth of the blanket depends on the amount of nap. The nap should not be allowed to mat down, for this decreases the heat conductivity, and the warmth of the blanket. Get a good blanket, and it can be re-napped."

I thanked Miss O'Brien for her advice about buying blankets. It's a subject we need to know more about; there's a great deal of money involved in buying these household necessities.

Before I left the Bureau of Home Economics, I went down the hall to see the Recipe Lady. She was making Cranberry Jelly, and some sort of a green Tomato pickle. To tell the truth, it was the tantalizing odor of the Green Tomato pickle that led me down the hall to the experimental kitchen. It's a good thing I went, too, for the Recipe Lady was just putting the finishing touches on a recipe for Honey Cake Filling.

"Like to have this recipe, Aunt Sammy?" said she. "Tell your radio friends that it's a cake filling, not a frosting. Too soft for a frosting, but delicious as a filling."

Here's the recipe for Honey Filling, just as it was made by the Recipe Lady. Three ingredients, for Honey Filling:

1/2 cup honey
1 egg white
1/8 teaspoon salt.

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Put the honey, salt and unbeaten egg white into the upper part of a double boiler. Have the water in the lower part boiling. Commence beating the mixture with a Dover beater at once and beat constantly until it cooks for 7 or 8 minutes. Take from the stove and continue to beat about 5 minutes or until very thick. This quantity will be sufficient to cover two medium sized layers and is to be used only as a cake filling as it does not harden.

Tomorrow: "Out of Babyhood Into Childhood."

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